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ARMS CONTROL AND DEFENSE PLANNING IN SOVIET STRATEGIC POLICY, (U)

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Benjamin S. Lambeth

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ARMS CONTROL AND DEFENSE PLANNING IN SOVIET STRATEGIC POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

One of the central themes in the classic American strategic literature of the 1960s held that arms control and defense planning ought to be treated as complementary approaches to the enhancement of nuclear deterrence.¹ What set this notion apart from prior concepts of "disarmament" was its rejection of appeals for force reductions as desirable ends in themselves and its insistence that arms control be pursued as an integral component of broader national security policy. Although it hinged critically on the untested assumption of joint superpower commitment to a shared conception of strategic stability, this outlook nonetheless marked a major advance in American thinking about nuclear matters through its characterization of arms control and strategy as opposite sides of the same coin.

In the years since that initial groundswell of arms control theorizing, the actual experience of the United States has been mixed. During the early negotiations leading to SALT I, the American side generally conducted itself with notable singularity of purpose. The Soviet Union, after all, was still busily engaged in a major buildup of its own strategic forces, and the prevailing hope was that a freeze on offensive force expansion and ABM deployment by both sides once the Soviet Union attained parity would both provide the Soviets an incentive to eschew further deployments and help serve the larger cause of deterrence by locking the superpowers into a stable relationship of

^{*} This is a revised version of a paper prepared for presentation at a colloquium on Arms Control and Defense Planning held at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C., November 28, 1979. It is to be published in Richard Burt, ed., *Arms Control and Defense Postures for the 1980s* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981).

mutual vulnerability. So long as the logic of this approach remained supported by reasonable hopes for Soviet compliance, U.S. SALT behavior stood closely congruent with the underlying goals of American strategic policy.

With the more recent signs of Moscow's determination to continue pressing for strategic advantages in the qualitative arena and its reaffirmation that competitive instincts still outweigh the elements of cooperation in Soviet-American strategic relations, however, an increasingly entrenched division has come to exist within the American strategic community over the question whether solutions to U.S. security requirements over the coming decade ought to be pursued through continued efforts at SALT or through a reversion to primary reliance on unilateral measures. This bifurcation has been a direct outgrowth of the gradual breakdown in the national consensus on strategic policy engendered by the unyielding thrust of Soviet force modernization. It was starkly punctuated by the severe difficulties that blocked Senate ratification of the SALT II treaty under the Carter administration. It has been exacerbated, moreover, by the relentless growth of an independent arms control subculture within and around the U.S. government as a result of the progressive institutionalization of SALT. Many of the individuals populating this emergent constituency have acquired natural ideological or bureaucratic commitments to the uninterrupted pursuit of negotiated agreements with the Soviet Union, seemingly irrespective of their possible effect, one way or the other, on broader U.S. national security.

The measures of merit advanced by those theoretical arms control notions which originally inspired U.S. entry into SALT insisted that the ultimate value of an agreement lay in its prospect for either reducing instabilities conducive to nuclear war or minimizing the damage such a war would inflict should it nonetheless occur. However noble an experiment SALT I may have been in this regard, most observers on both sides of the strategic divide would agree that SALT II utterly failed to satisfy either criterion. On the contrary, the Minuteman vulnerability problem which now almost inevitably promises to be upon us by the mid-1980s constitutes a net *erosion* in the stability of the

In marked contrast to this division of the American arms control and defense communities into ideologically opposed camps, the Soviet Union has consistently approached SALT as a unified actor with a well-developed sense of strategic purpose. The Soviets have never regarded arms control as an *alternative* to unilateral defense investments (as many American SALT enthusiasts tend to have done) but rather have treated it as a direct adjunct of their national security planning, much in keeping with the original U.S. scholarly arguments noted above. The critical difference has been in the ultimate goals sought by Soviet planners. The American case for linking arms control to force development was intended to provide the basis for a coordinated approach to deterrence stability through negotiated self-denying ordinances aimed at proscribing weapons deployments that might give either side a credible first-strike capability. The Soviet case appears more to have been motivated by a self-interested desire to bring U.S. force planning into an explicit negotiating context that might allow Soviet

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planners to impose constraints on U.S. strategic programs, while at the same time exacting American acceptance of countervailing Soviet programs and pursuing whatever margin of strategic advantage the traffic of SALT and detente might allow. In this sense, Moscow's arms control policy has not only been consonant with Soviet defense planning but indeed has constituted an integral part of it, aimed at helping achieve--to the maximum extent possible--Soviet strategic goals on the cheap through negotiation rather than through the more costly avenue of unrestrained arms competition.

Any effort to get at the detailed planning assumptions and organizational workings of Soviet arms control decisionmaking must recognize a substantial degree of uncertainty due to the obstacles posed by Soviet secrecy and societal closure. Moreover, much of what we do know about Soviet SALT processes and objectives has already been discussed at length in the Western analytical literature. Accordingly, the remarks below will neither pretend to offer the final word on Soviet arms control motivations nor attempt to reconstruct in any detail the history and purposes of Soviet participation in SALT. Rather, it will simply try to advance a considered view of how Soviet arms control involvement should be understood, with particular emphasis on the important differences between the Soviet approach and that hitherto pursued by the United States. It will briefly examine the role assigned to arms control in the overall Soviet concept of national security, review some specific examples suggested by the apparent linkage between Soviet ICBM modernization programs and SALT negotiating positions, and finally highlight those features of the Soviet SALT policymaking context that most clearly illustrate the close integration of arms control and force planning in Soviet defense deliberations.

ARMS CONTROL IN SOVIET STRATEGIC THINKING

During the formative years of the postwar era when the United States was clearly the predominant nuclear power, the Soviet Union made almost a national industry of generating multiple negotiatory schemes couched in the language of "general and complete disarmament." Despite the intensity of their diplomatic campaigning, however, the

Soviets conspicuously refrained from coupling these exhortations with tangible gestures of self-restraint that might indicate any real commitment to arms control beneath their declaratory rhetoric. Instead, their calls for "disarmament" typically featured comprehensive proposals of a sort they knew in advance would prove unacceptable to the United States, thus allowing them to project an image of reasonableness and devotion to "peace" without having to make any substantial sacrifices in the process. At this level of discourse, Soviet negotiatory posturing was merely a component of Moscow's larger foreign propaganda effort rather than a reflection of serious willingness to undertake reciprocal measures of self-denial in strategic force deployment. Whatever thoughts the Soviet leaders may have privately harbored concerning the long-term utility of genuine arms control measures remained subordinated to the more immediate needs of catching up with the United States in aggregate strategic nuclear power.³

With the advent of SALT, however, Soviet arms control behavior became dramatically transformed from hollow diplomatic drum-beating at the United Nations to a serious pursuit of bilateral negotiations aimed at achieving realistic agreements whose terms might ultimately serve Soviet security interests. The most telling indication of this emergent Soviet seriousness of intent was the transferral of responsibility for formulating Soviet arms control proposals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the traditional repository of earlier Soviet "disarmament" activity) to those defense-related organizations directly concerned with Soviet force-structure development. By this time, as a result of its vigorous military buildup first set in motion following the Cuban missile disaster of 1962, the Soviet Union had finally achieved a posture of acknowledged parity with the United States and could accordingly begin thinking about the potential benefits an arms control dialogue might offer in helping to preserve that hard-won achievement. Although the Soviets entered SALT with more diffidence than enthusiasm and had little expectation at the outset that it would ultimately become the centerpiece of Soviet-American diplomatic relations, the tentative expression by Foreign Minister Gromyko in June 1968 that the Soviet Union was now ready for an "exchange of opinion" on mutual

restrictions in strategic offensive and defensive arms nonetheless marked a major watershed in Soviet thinking about arms control.⁴

The Soviet acceptance of SALT as an appropriate instrument for helping manage the superpower competition, on the other hand, in no way constituted either a testament to any broader change in fundamental Soviet security conception or evidence of Soviet convergence toward prevailing American notions about arms control. For Soviet planners, the very idea of "control" is anathema because of its implied relegation of Soviet security to imposed arrangements requiring conscious Soviet self-denial and reliance on the uncertain prospect of reciprocal enemy "good behavior." This reluctance to countenance such restraints is a natural outgrowth of the Soviet Union's rejection of such Western concepts as "stability," "mutual deterrence," and "essential equivalence," which envisage a preservation of the status quo and call for each side to accept an autonomous "system" of superpower interaction allegedly self-equilibrating in nature, yet grounded in the end on assumptions of adversarial rationality and forbearance.⁵ This intellectual outlook largely accounts for the emphasis placed by Soviet military doctrine on the importance of a military posture capable of fighting a nuclear war in the event deterrence fails and substantially explains the massive efforts the Soviets have undertaken over the past decade to expand and modernize their strategic and general-purpose forces.

More important for this discussion, it also provides the context in which Soviet SALT behavior should be understood. Like their American counterparts, the Soviets appreciate the unmitigated horrors a nuclear war would unleash and unquestioningly accept the necessity of ensuring deterrence as their first order of strategic business. Their notion of how this goal ought to be pursued, however, is notably different from that which has, at least until recently, rested at the heart of accepted Western strategic theory. This divergent Soviet view entails, among other things, an abiding belief in the unreliability of deterrence, a related conviction that some recognizable form of victory in nuclear war is theoretically attainable if the proper weapons and strategies are maintained, and a consequent stress on the indispensability of large offensive forces, continued investment in active and passive defenses,

and adherence to a concept of warfare that expressly accommodates the option of preempting.

From the beginning of SALT, this conception of the nuclear predicament and its force-posture imperatives has had a major impact on Soviet strategic programs and has been largely responsible for the repeated disappointments the United States has encountered in its efforts to draw the Soviets into a common language of strategic discourse. It has been the principal factor behind the Soviet Union's singular failure to date to offer any SALT initiative whose principal intent has been to enhance strategic "stability." It also explains the Soviet Union's refusal to abide by any agreement whose effect is to formalize Soviet strategic vulnerabilities or coopt Soviet participation in solving the unilateral security problems of the United States. On the first count, Moscow's rejection of "mutual assured destruction" substantially accounts for the extensive Soviet civil defense effort, as well as the parallel Soviet pursuit of active defenses against U.S. bombers and cruise missiles and advanced R&D on ballistic missile defense. On the second count, the Soviet repudiation of "stability" through mutual exposure to nuclear devastation explains Moscow's cultivated indifference to the growing problem of Minuteman survivability and the Soviet leadership's determination to seek as much in the way of unilateral force advantages as Soviet resources, SALT constraints, and U.S. tolerance will permit. Against the possible objection that these Soviet preferences merely reflect the parochial self-interests of the uniformed services, it should be recalled that no less a "moderate" than the late Premier Kosygin was moved to tell President Johnson at the Glassboro summit in 1967 that a ban on ballistic missile defenses was, in Henry Kissinger's words, "the most absurd proposition he had ever heard."⁶ For a whole variety of historical and cultural reasons, belief in the necessity of defending the homeland with every means available is deeply rooted in the Soviet political-military psyche. The idea that nuclear weapons have somehow rendered international security a "community responsibility" requiring cooperative restraints on the part of both superpowers is simply counterintuitive to long-established patterns of Soviet strategic thought.

The net effect on SALT created by this Soviet propensity to rely on unilateral initiatives rather than negotiated measures for assuring Soviet security has been a clear Soviet determination to use arms control in support of Soviet strategic goals. Seen from this perspective, SALT has proven for the Soviets to be a lucrative means for seeking to impose constraints on American exploitation of military technology, while providing a context for continuing the development and operational application of Soviet military technology with the express blessings of the United States, as reflected in the formal language of whatever agreements that Soviet negotiating finesse can help bring about. For Soviet planners, SALT has not been an exercise in "arms control" at all. Instead, to bend the idiom of Clausewitz somewhat, it has been a continuation of strategy by other means.

Moscow's acceptance of the ABM treaty is a representative case in point. Although that gesture was widely interpreted by Westerners at the time as tacit proof that the Soviet Union had finally assimilated the wisdom of U.S. "stability" theory and acknowledged the inexorability of mutual vulnerability as the only solution to the nuclear security dilemma, it is far more likely that the Soviets saw the technically superior American Safeguard ABM as a threat to the emerging Soviet fourth-generation ICBM force and were driven to sacrifice their own marginal GALOSH ABM as a necessary price for defusing that threat until Soviet technology could produce a more effective ballistic missile defense. In sharp contrast to American orthodoxy, Soviet military doctrine has shown no sign over the years since the ABM treaty was concluded of having abandoned its traditional emphasis on the importance of strategic defense in modern warfare. In consonance with this doctrinal preference, the Soviet defense community has continued to conduct vigorous and well-funded development and test activities in BMD technology with unrelenting determination throughout the period of the treaty.

This self-serving exploitation of SALT for unilateral gain has been less a product of calculated Soviet malevolence than simply a natural extension of Soviet strategic logic. Soviet leaders, both civilian and military, recognize the uncertainties of deterrence,

refuse to count on it even as they try their best to preserve it, and regard as their principal responsibility of national stewardship the maintenance of credible military capabilities for vouchsafing Soviet survival in the event of its catastrophic failure. Soviet military doctrine, in turn, considers nuclear victory to be technically feasible and offers explicit conceptual and hardware solutions for achieving it should circumstances permit no alternative. As a consequence, Soviet defense policy seeks the maintenance of a plausible warfighting capability and demands vigorous Soviet efforts to deny the enemy a similar capability. Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union has no intellectual tradition that treats arms control and stability as alternatives to unilateral force enhancement. Its national security principals regard SALT as but one of a broad variety of methods for assuring a strategic posture capable of achieving Soviet wartime political-military objectives should lesser options for maintaining Soviet survival prove unavailing. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that Soviet spokesmen should display such umbrage at Western intimations that their apparent obstinacy at SALT reflects an affront to the "spirit" of arms control. Their failure to show obeisance to this "spirit" is less an example of Machiavellian double-dealing than an indication that the premises and motivations behind American participation in SALT have simply been fundamentally alien to the Soviet way of thinking about strategic affairs.

SALT AND SOVIET ICBM MODERNIZATION

Perhaps the clearest testament to the interdependency of Soviet arms control behavior and defense program implementation may be found in the way Soviet negotiators have exploited their so-called "informational asymmetry" advantage created by Soviet secrecy for seeking SALT agreements that would avoid significantly impeding Soviet ICBM modernization plans. During the initial SALT I discussions on offensive forces, the Soviet delegation adamantly refused to agree on a precise definition of what constituted a "heavy" ICBM and succeeded in producing a settlement that remained studiously vague regarding permissible volumetric expansion of SS-11 silos.⁷ At the time SALT I

was concluded, the Soviets had not yet begun flight-testing their SS-19 which was intended to replace the SS-11. U.S. intelligence thus has little basis for anticipating the dramatic improvement in payload capability which that system portended. Less than a year after the Soviets had secured their needed ambiguity in the SALT I accord, however, the demonstrated performance capabilities of the SS-19 revealed an effective throw-weight increase of between four and five times that of the SS-11, to the profound consternation of the American defense community.⁸

As a result of the hard-target capability afforded by their MIRVed SS-19 inventory (with the additional support of their SS-18 force), the Soviets have, for all practical purposes, "legally" acquired through negotiating stratagem a credible counterforce option against Minuteman. This is precisely the sort of "destabilizing" posture which U.S. entry into SALT was intended to head off. Had the American side possessed the requisite information and foresight to insist on more restrictive missile and silo growth limitations, the SS-19 would have been ruled out as an acceptable Soviet alternative. Yet we know with hindsight that the SS-19 must have been in full-scale engineering development for some time before SALT I was concluded. It is thus a fair presumption that the Soviets intended it to be a central mainstay of their ICBM posture at least through the mid-1980s. Given the considerable momentum that had almost surely accumulated in the SS-19 program well before the 1972 Moscow summit and the evident Soviet determination to see the system attain large-scale deployment, it is interesting to speculate whether the Soviets might have so valued the promise of that weapon that they would have been prepared to let SALT I go by the boards altogether if it threatened, through U.S. insistence on more constraining language in the interim agreement, to stand in the way of SS-19 deployment. As matters turned out, however, the negotiating instructions given to the Soviet delegation so handily supported achievement of the SS-19 program's needed technological maneuvering room that conscious leadership contrivance, rather than coincidence, constitutes the only plausible explanation.

In general, the Soviet approach to SALT I seems to have been carefully orchestrated with the intent to secure American consent to an agreement that would allow preexisting Soviet missile modernization programs to achieve the objectives that were intended by Soviet planners in any event. To be sure, the numerical restriction on ICBM silos and SLBM tubes did place a ceiling on the permissible size of the Soviet launcher inventory and, for all we know, may have forced the Soviets to settle for a somewhat more modest construction effort than they might have been inclined to pursue in the absence of SALT. There seems little question, however, that the Soviet leaders were fully determined from the outset not to allow SALT to get in the way of their highly valued qualitative force improvements which were in train beneath American scrutiny. This commitment to tailoring their SALT proposals and bargaining strategies in direct support of their ongoing strategic postural improvements rather than in service of any broader quest for "stability" (which would have required significant material concessions) was emphatically underscored by their careful insistence on ambiguity in the terms governing allowable SS-11 silo modification. It was further reflected in their adamant refusal to countenance the MIRV deployment ban originally proposed by the United States during the initial negotiating rounds of SALT I and their equally persistent demand for an advantage in SSBN numbers on what was later revealed, through intercontinental-range flight testing of the SS-N-8 SLBM, to have been completely spurious and disingenuous grounds of "adverse geographical asymmetries."⁹

For that matter, the Soviets never consented to any limitation on actual *missile* numbers but only on the total number of observable launch *facilities*. This left them fully free to continue producing and stockpiling a reserve inventory of boosters and warheads that might be drawn upon in crises to support either a silo reload option or a supplementary ICBM force maintained in hardened but concealed launch positions.¹⁰ Although many U.S. intelligence officials consider this threat unlikely and claim possession of adequate verification techniques to detect any significant Soviet missile stockpiling effort, the fact remains that to this day we still have no confident knowledge of the size of the Soviet ICBM inventory.¹¹

A final example worthy of note concerning the commanding role played by unilateral strategic interests in shaping Soviet SALT behavior was the categorical Soviet refusal even to entertain, let alone consider, the comprehensive proposal for ICBM reductions put forward by the Carter administration in March 1977. Even though this proposal included an avowed U.S. willingness to forego MX in return for a drawdown of deployed Soviet heavy SS-18 launchers, it was summarily rejected by the Soviet leadership on the ground that it would result in an unfair advantage for the United States. Although this "unfair advantage" would at best have merely given the U.S. side a somewhat more balanced Soviet ICBM threat to confront, the Soviets proved unprepared to pay the price of tangible cuts in their established base of strategic power in return for what they evidently regarded as little more than a tenuous U.S. promissory note. Whether the Soviets were genuinely offended by the surprise and publicity with which the U.S. administration sprung its proposal or simply felt that, if left alone, MX would ultimately die a natural death in the arena of U.S. domestic politics, the fact remains that they refused to allow any concession to the goal of a more moderated East-West arms competition to undo their substantial offensive force improvements, which they maintained had already been ratified by SALT I and the subsequent Vladivostok accords. If the comprehensive Carter proposal was indeed advanced, as some of its authors claimed after the fact, with the intent to "smoke the Russians out" and test their commitment to "real arms control," one can scarcely imagine a more definitive Soviet reply than the one it abruptly provoked.¹²

It should be noted before leaving this topic that the primacy of unilateral strategic program commitments in Soviet SALT policy suggested by the examples presented above does not mean that the Soviet defense-industrial complex operates as a hermetically sealed Leviathan totally unaffected by conflicting considerations emanating from Soviet interests in a continued relationship of detente with the West. On the contrary, there are several indications in the terms of SALT II that the Soviets fully appreciated the extent to which they successfully bamboozled the United States in SALT I,

recognized the difficulties they would encounter in trying to get away with such sleight of hand again in the face of an adversary now forewarned and less malleable, and accordingly agreed to at least three concessions on further ICBM modernization of a sort that, in a liberal interpretation, could be seen as reflecting top-level political reversal of previously authorized and funded missile design activities. The first was the Soviet consent to cancel the SS-16 program, the second was Moscow's agreement to limit itself to a single follow-on ICBM beyond the current fourth generation, and the third was the ultimate Soviet expression of willingness, after much heel-dragging, to accept a "five percent rule" governing permissible growth or downsizing of its chosen follow-on system from the established baseline parameters of the SS-19.

On the first score, one could plausibly reply that the solid-propellant SS-16 had long been plagued with well-known developmental problems and that by agreeing to give it up, the Soviets offered little more than the gratuitous discarding of a weapon they probably had no intention of deploying in significant numbers in any event. In the case of the latter two examples, it would be harder to build a convincing argument that the Soviet missile design community escaped with its vested interests as intact as it apparently did after SALT I, even though demonstrated Soviet negotiating guile and residual uncertainty about what range of options the "five percent rule" still leaves open for the Soviets may ultimately prove to satisfy the bulk of intended Soviet fifth-generation ICBM improvements notwithstanding the constraints of SALT II.

All the same, there is little evidence that the Soviets have abandoned their abiding view of SALT as a diplomatic adjunct of their broader effort to acquire a strategic war-fighting capability, irrespective of whatever upsetting consequences this may have on the long-term pattern of Soviet-American interaction. They have shown no sensitivity whatever to repeatedly articulated American security concerns and plainly consider their emerging threat to Minuteman as a problem, notwithstanding its destabilizing potential and its effect in driving the United States toward major offsetting measures we might

genuinely prefer to avoid. They have further refrained from showing any interest in self-restraint along the lines of the abortive U.S. proposal to trade MX for their "heavy" ICBMs and have succeeded in gaining considerable indirect leverage over the MX basing mode by using the SALT I silo-limitation provision to force MX out of its earlier vertical-shelter arrangement and into the more expensive horizontal basing scheme.¹³ Altogether, whatever one might be able to say about the various bureaucratic compromises that have left their mark on Soviet programs as a consequence of SALT, the Soviet Union has--in clear contrast to recent American experience--remained thoroughly unafflicted by any gross inconsistency of strategic objectives or disruptive "left hand knoweth not..." syndrome in its efforts to coordinate SALT with its broader force improvement plans.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF SOVIET ARMS CONTROL PLANNING

Probably the main reason for this close integration of Soviet SALT policy and defense planning is the fact that the key institutions and individuals responsible for these two areas of activity are all but indistinguishable from one another. It would require far more space than is available here to provide a full reconstruction of what little we know about Soviet organizational arrangements and procedures for dealing with these interrelated matters.¹⁴ Their most salient feature, however, is the clear predominance (if not outright monopoly) of military influence and presence in Soviet SALT decisionmaking. As noted above, during the early years of the Cold War when East-West arms control activity was largely a matter of countervailing propaganda posturing without much underlying seriousness, the business of "disarmament" proposing was left to diplomats in the Foreign Ministry while the uniformed professionals went about dealing with the more pressing concerns of undergirding Soviet national security. Once the SALT dialogue that commenced in the late 1960s began to highlight the potential value of arms control for supporting Soviet strategic ambitions and channeling the arms competition in a direction more congenial to Soviet interests, however, authorities in the Defense Ministry, General Staff, and military-industrial apparatus moved into the breach as the

key players in the SALT forum, relegating the formerly preeminent Foreign Ministry to a largely passive implementation role. Although the initial Soviet SALT delegation was nominally headed by a seasoned Foreign Ministry official, Vladimir Semenov, its overall composition was heavily weighted with representatives from the armed forces and defense-related ministries. Virtually all Western accounts of the turbulent history of SALT since those early beginnings leave little room for doubt that it was the latter who figured most prominently in shaping the character of Soviet negotiating style.

Unlike the American side, with its sizeable bureaucratic infrastructure expressly devoted to the pursuit of arms control as a full-time occupation, the Soviet Union has no readily-identifiable "arms control community" or SALT constituency apart from the armed forces and the military-related ministry and party officials primarily responsible for Soviet defense policy. Although civilian analysts in the various Soviet research institutes are occasionally called upon to generate background studies on such peripheral matters as American strategic perceptions and the impact of domestic influences on U.S. defense policy, they are expressly enjoined from submitting formal SALT proposals or otherwise participating in Soviet SALT policy deliberations and are almost completely cut off from the critical sources of data about Soviet strategic programs that would be required to support any such activity.¹⁵ The same apparently applies even to government officials in the Foreign Ministry more directly involved in SALT matters, as best underscored by the now-classic case of General Ogarkov's admonition to the U.S. SALT I delegation to refrain from discussing the details of Soviet strategic forces in the presence of his civilian associates on the Soviet team for the reason that such information was "strictly the affair of the military."¹⁶

By all available indications, the Soviet defense community not only maintains a tightly-guarded monopoly of information regarding strategic plans and SALT options but also an exclusive role in the formulation of Soviet SALT negotiating positions. This primacy accorded to military interests in the Soviet SALT process was highlighted during the eleventh hour of negotiations over SALT I at the Moscow

summit in 1972, when the Soviets interjected as their principal arbitrator the chairman of the Military-Industrial Commission, L. V. Smirnov, who Henry Kissinger described in his memoirs as "a personality new to all Americans present."¹⁷ Through his responsibility as the principal overseer of Soviet military R&D and strategic programs, Smirnov is one of the most authoritative bureaucratic players in the development and modernization of Soviet strategic forces. His public surfacing in so critical a negotiatory role during SALT I was a revealing indication of his deep and driving influence (along with that of the Defense Ministry more generally) in shaping Soviet SALT proposals so as to accommodate collateral Soviet interests in the realm of advanced weapons development and deployment.

Aside from this close association, if not outright indivisibility, of Soviet arms control planners and defense decisionmakers, the Soviet national security community enjoys a degree of maneuvering freedom and immunity from disruptive internal influences far greater than that obtainable in the highly pluralistic American system. There is no legislative body comparable to the U.S. Congress to place obstructions in the path of Soviet SALT planning or to voice special interests to which Soviet strategic policymakers must be responsive. There is no recognizable Soviet "arms control lobby" in any position to put forward influential SALT proposals that would threaten to cut against the grain of established Soviet military doctrine and policy. Finally, there is no significant "hawk-dove" dichotomy *within* the Soviet political-military-industrial nexus tasked with strategic responsibilities that might suggest any fundamental disagreement over the basic objectives and modalities of Soviet national security policy. Although there were some faint hints during the initial period of exploratory probings prior to the start of SALT I that could have been read as indicating somewhat less than unbridled military enthusiasm for what the Soviet Union might be getting itself into,¹⁸ there has generally appeared in subsequent years to be a remarkable convergence of political and military views on the basic desiderata of Soviet military investment and the overall goals of Soviet security planning. Whether it constitutes a cause, a consequence, or both, this close coalescence

of Soviet SALT behavior with unilateral Soviet strategic interests has been steadfastly assured by the nearly total institutional integration of civilian and military viewpoints in such critical centers of decisionmaking as the Defense Council, the Military-Industrial Commission, and indeed the Politburo itself.

To what extent SALT considerations are caught up in--and affected by--Soviet domestic politics is hard to say given the paucity of available information that might shed useful light on this question. It is highly unlikely, however, that Soviet SALT involvement is even remotely buffeted by the sort of wide-ranging institutional rivalries and conflicting political values that so heavily influence the course and character of U.S. strategic policymaking. However much Brezhnev may have staked his own political fortunes and those of his potential successors on the continued success of SALT and detente, he has almost certainly done so with a careful eye toward the abiding purpose of that commitment, namely, the enhancement of Soviet power. Neither he, nor any other principals of note in the Soviet hierarchy, are likely to have come to regard SALT either as a process with intrinsic value or as something the Soviet Union is necessarily obliged to pursue at the expense of continued force improvements deemed vital for underwriting Soviet military doctrine and global objectives.

NOTES

1. This proposition received its first systematic treatment in the landmark symposium edited by Donald G. Brennan, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security*, (New York: George Braziller, 1961). Its most thorough development may be found in Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961).
2. This tendency first developed during the latter years of the Nixon/Ford incumbency and reached its pinnacle under the leadership of President Carter. Since the advent of the Reagan administration, however, there have been signs of a determined effort to put the defense and foreign-affairs components of the U.S. government back on a common track and to reintegrate the arms control process into its proper place in national security planning. In his recent confirmation hearings, the director-designate of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Eugene Rostow, expressly reflected this commitment in his assertion that "our ten years of experience with SALT I and SALT II have been painful and unsatisfactory. Our first task, therefore, is to reassess the role of arms limitation agreements in our foreign and defense policy." Michael Getler, "Rostow's Testimony Illustrates Reagan's Shift on Arms Control," *Washington Post*, June 24, 1981.
3. The earlier history of this period is well reviewed in John W. Spanier, *The Politics of Disarmament: A Study in Soviet-American Gamesmanship* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962). See also Alexander Dallin, *The Soviet Union and Disarmament* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965) and Thomas B. Larson, *Disarmament and Soviet Policy, 1964-1968* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1968).
4. Report by Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko, "On the International Situation and the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union," *Pravda*, June 28, 1968.
5. The most commonly-cited expression of this Soviet doctrinal orientation is the following comment made by the late Major General Nikolai Talenskii in justification of Soviet efforts in ballistic missile defense during the mid-1960s: "When the security of a state is based only on mutual deterrence with the aid of powerful nuclear rockets, it is directly dependent on the good will and designs of the other side, which is a highly subjective and indefinite factor.... It would hardly be in the interests of any peaceloving state to forgo the creation of its own effective means of defense against nuclear-rocket aggression and make its security dependent only on deterrence, that is, on whether the other side will refrain from attacking." "Antimissile Systems and Disarmament," in John Erickson, ed., *The Military-Technical Revolution* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), pp. 225-227.

6. Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 208.
7. The protocol to the interim agreement stipulated that silo expansion not exceed "10-15 percent of the present dimensions," but left undetermined whether that included both depth and diameter or only one or the other of these parameters. See *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, June 1977), pp. 142-143.
8. Colin S. Gray, "Soviet Rocket Forces: Military Capability, Political Utility," *Air Force Magazine*, March 1978, p. 52.
9. As one may recall, the interim agreement granted the Soviets a roughly three-to-two numerical advantage in ballistic missile submarines, on the ground that the longer transit times required for Soviet SSBNs to reach their patrolling stations compared to those of the United States due to unfavorable geographic circumstances necessitated this margin of Soviet superiority in order to provide Moscow the capability to match the number of U.S. boats on operational deployment at any given time. The speciousness of this argument only became clear in the aftermath of the 1972 summit which produced the SALT I accords, when full-range testing of the SS-N-8 confirmed its capacity to cover most U.S. targets from Soviet territorial waters.
10. For further discussion, see Amrom Katz, *Verification and SALT: The State of the Art and the Art of the State* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1979), especially pp. 32-37.
11. A U.S. intelligence study published in 1979 reportedly claimed that the Soviet Union may have accumulated as many as a thousand ICBMs beyond the number formally accounted for in the SALT I agreements. See Henry S. Bradsher, "New Study Raises Soviet Missile Total," *New York Times*, April 12, 1971.
12. For a full review of the pertinent details on this episode, see Strobe Talbott, *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 38-67.
13. The U.S. Air Force presently maintains that the horizontal shelter scheme for MX has turned out to be operationally preferable to the abandoned vertical basing mode in any event because of its inherent advantage in supporting a dash redeployment of MX on assessment of imminent attack. The fact remains, however, that the original impetus behind the horizontal shelter arrangement stemmed from concern on the part of the Carter administration about the possible ambiguities the vertical silo configuration might have raised concerning MX compliance with SALT I and the subsequent Vladivostok accords.
14. The most thorough treatment of what is publicly known about these Soviet arrangements and procedures may be found in Thomas W. Wolfe,

The SALT Experience (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 49-77.

15. For an insightful first-hand argument to this effect by a former Soviet researcher who headed the Disarmament Section of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, USSR Academy of Sciences, see Igor S. Glagolev, "The Soviet Decision-making Process in Arms Control Negotiations," *Orbis*, Winter 1978, pp. 767-776.
16. John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 56.
17. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1233.
18. As a case in point, one Soviet military commentator with well-established hardline credentials publicly argued only three months following Foreign Minister Gromyko's expression of willingness to open a SALT dialogue with the United States that "we cannot agree with the view that disarmament can be achieved as a result of peaceful negotiation of this acute and complex problem by the representatives of opposing social systems.... Under contemporary conditions, the primary task of the socialist countries is the strengthening of their armed forces, increasing their capabilities and their readiness." Colonel Ye. Rybkin, "A Critique of Bourgeois Concepts of War and Peace," *Kommunist Voorusheniykh Sil*, No. 18 (September 1968), p. 90.

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